DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 482 860 PS 031 699

AUTHOR	Oshinsky, Carole J., Ed.
TITLE	The Forum, 2003. Research Forum on Children, Families, and the New Federalism.
INSTITUTION	Columbia Univ., New York, NY. National Center for Children in Poverty.
SPONS AGENCY	Chase Manhattan Foundations, New York, NY.; Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, New York, NY.; George Gund Foundation, Cleveland, OH.; David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Los Altos, CA.; United Way of New York City, NY.; Department of Health and Human Services, Washington, DC.; Annie E. Casey Foundation, Baltimore, MD.
PUB DATE	2003-00-00
NOTE	24p.; Published quarterly. For earlier issues, see ED 472 544.
AVAILABLE FROM	Research Forum on Children, Families, and the New Federalism, NCCP, 154 Haven Avenue, New York, NY 10032. Tel: 212-304-7150; Fax: 212-544-4200; e-mail: info@researchforum.org; Web site: http://www.researchforum.org.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022) -- Reports - Evaluative (142)
JOURNAL CIT	The Forum; v6 n1-4 Jan-Oct 2003
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS
DESCRIPTORS	*Child Welfare; *Children; Client Attitudes (Human Services); Data Collection; Employment; Evaluation Research; Family Work Relationship; Human Services; Integrated Services; Low Income Groups; National Surveys; Newsletters; *Poverty; Program Evaluation; *Public Policy; Research Methodology; State Surveys; *Welfare Recipients; *Welfare Reform; Well Being
IDENTIFIERS	Indicators; Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; Welfare to Work Programs

ABSTRACT

This document contains the 2003 issues of a quarterly newsletter encouraging collaborative research and informed policy on welfare reform and focusing on use of an on-line database of child welfare research projects, as well as on research and policy issues related to implementation studies, indicators of well-being, and administrative data. Each issue focuses on a particular topic: (1) the importance of research on welfare programs during a period of uncertainty about welfare funding, including descriptions of key ongoing and new research projects (January); (2) multiple strategies and critical factors for integrating human services (March); (3) Congress' consideration of two options for measuring success of TANF for children (June); and (4) positive effects of increased work supports on employment, income, and child well-being (October). (KB)

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ED 482 860

The Forum, 2003. Research Forum on Children, Families, and the New Federalism.

Vol. 6, No. 1-4 Jan-Oct 2003

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National Center for Children in Poverty
Columbia University

2003

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the forum VOL. 6, NO. 1 JANUARY 2003

RESEARCH FORUM ON CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND THE NEW FEDERALISM

Research on Welfare Programs Important During a Period of Uncertainty

by Barbara B. Blum

When the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) was enacted in 1996, the statute specified that its provisions would be effective October 1, 1996 and extend until September 30, 2002. That meant that in order for the changes legislated to continue or be amended, Congress would need to reauthorize legislation related to cash assistance and work before September 30, 2002.

Reauthorization did not occur before the September date. Instead, Congress passed a continuing resolution that froze discretionary spending at fiscal year 2002 levels and authorized states to operate programs under the PRWORA provisions until March 31, 2003.

The failure of Congress to reauthorize legislation for cash assistance and work-related activities occurs during a period of domestic and international turmoil, a period of economic downturn and political tensions. In the United States, a series of corporate scandals and reduced profits has roiled the equities market for some time. As a result, unemployment rates have begun to increase for the first time in nine years.

New Foreign Focus, Changing Politics, Looming Reauthorizations

At the same time, the events related to September 11, 2001 and other terrorist activities are having an effect on domestic and international policy. A new focus on homeland security is diverting attention from other domestic policy concerns, as does the war on terrorism, initially in Afghanistan and now increasingly with the possibility of war with Iraq. And these and other policy commitments are consuming the energies of our national leaders.

Meanwhile, the fall elections of 2002 changed Congressional leadership. The Republicans won three new seats in the U.S. Senate and 229 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, ensuring that their party would control the national agenda. Of even greater moment, 22 new governors were elected, while 13 incumbents were selected and 15 continued in their positions. At the state legislative level, turnover was the highest in the nation's history.

Because of primary losses, retirement, or term limits, 24 percent of seats changed hands before Election Day. Since Election Day, preliminary results, pending recounts, indicate that there will be a 27 percent turnover rate overall. (This is compared with an 18 percent turnover rate for the average election year.) In addition, Republicans gained a significant number of seats, bringing an almost 50–50 split in control of statehouse seats, with six states changing party control.

The new actors at the federal and state level are not only confronting uncertainty about PRWORA-related funding (particularly TANF). Other reauthorizations are scheduled in 2003, including the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG); the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG); the Workforce Investment Act (WIA); the Job Access and Reverse Commute Grant Program (JARC); the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and other child nutrition programs; and the Head Start program.

These programs interact in interesting and often unpredictable ways. Decisions made in Congress and later in statehouses about these programs can have profound effects on the lives of poor people.

Note from the Director–Barbara B. Blum

As this issue of the forum goes to press, uncertainty exists about when or how the new Congress will deal with reauthorization of statutes which will affect the lives of poor citizens. This is particularly troubling during a period of economic downturn when stable resources are crucial for states and localities. The effects of the current uncertainty has implications for program administration and for research.

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Limited Available Dollars Will Drive Domestic Policy

What do these momentous changes portend for a population that is poor?

First of all, it seems clear that fiscal concerns will drive domestic policy. In 43 states, deficits exist, with California's $35 billion deficit leading the way. Drastic layoffs have been taking place in both the public and private sectors. The deficits, of course, relate to reduced tax revenues and reflect downturns in capital gains and corporate profits.

The possibility of federal relief is not likely—at least not in the short term. The federal deficit has now been projected by the Congressional Budget Office at $145 billion for 2003. This does not include the cost of a Middle East war estimated to cost between $200 billion and $1 trillion.

Absent any infusion of new tax revenue, the fiscal picture is extraordinarily bleak. In fact, states will be fortunate to receive allocations reflecting past PRWORA appropriations.

Cutbacks in Services, Staff, Welfare-to-Work Activities

With such uncertainty about future resources and with the grim reality of current revenue shortfalls, several hypotheses seem plausible.

The first is that governors and their human resources administrators will be very cautious. New program development is unlikely and cutbacks in services may be required. This will affect many of the working poor who have benefited from TANF funding, but it will also most drastically affect the vulnerable populations who need intensive social services. Cutbacks in staffing automatically reduce the capacity to support movement into employment or to assist workers to retain their employment.

Second and more basic, however, is the fact that movement into employment will be constrained by economic conditions. With hundreds of thousands being laid off (some of whom have been TANF clients—the welfare program set up by PRWORA whose official name is Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), movement of current clients will be very difficult. Welfare caseloads have already been increasing in key states, supporting the hypothesis that the previous strong economy played a major role in moving people off the rolls.

Third, the uncertainty created by national priorities and inadequate resources will stifle the desire to experiment and learn about poor people. During a period when attention is focused on homeland security and the war on terrorism, the public's attention has moved away from inquiring about how to intervene with the most vulnerable citizens.

Opportunities and Limitations for Welfare Research Activities

Clearly, current conditions are not conducive to innovative program development and experimentation.

However, the findings now available about the characteristics of TANF clients (both stayers and leavers), information about barriers to employment and the effects of multiple barriers on entry to and retention in the work force, and the positive impacts of financial incentives all warrant attention—especially during this period of uncertainty. In addition, studies on the effects of an economic downturn on a work-based, time-limited welfare program will be important.

There are opportunities, too.

If the economic downturn continues, the development and testing of work experience programs should have priority. Initiatives modeled on the Depression-era Work Projects Administration (WPA) could use existing resources well *and* provide infrastructure benefits to communities across the nation.

In addition, providing a more rational delivery of services, including cash assistance, food stamps, child care, and health benefits, could help sustain and improve the lives of the working and nonworking poor.

Finally, more creative use of administrative data can help identify trends that merit attention. Certainly employment trends are critical, but understanding changes in the conditions of specific populations like children and immigrants is also crucial if we are to use scarce resources well.

In the meantime, sustaining the impressive set of research experiments currently underway and monitoring their findings is extraordinarily important, as the questions addressed are so relevant to the next generation of welfare programs. New major projects underway include: the Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) project; the Hard-to-Employ Evaluation; the Rural Welfare-to-Work Evaluation; the Child Care Subsidy Demonstration; the School Readiness Projects Evaluation; the Independent Living Evaluation; the Building Strong Families Evaluation; and the Head Start Impact Study.

While the economic environment is daunting, opportunities exist to apply lessons learned from research already completed, to sustain and monitor research now underway, and to identify new areas for research, such as work experience programs and service integration.

The bottom line is that we continue to learn what interventions work and for whom.

Key Ongoing and New Welfare Research Projects

WORK ISSUES

Employment Retention and Advancement (ERA) Project

Evaluator	Manpower Development Research Corporation (MDRC)
Project Period	September 1998 – September 2006
Research Design	Random assignment of program and control groups (experimental impact)
Sites Studied	California, Florida, Illinois, Minnesota, New York, Oregon, Ohio, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas
Findings	Implementation findings available
Project Summary	The ERA Evaluation is a multi-site, multi-year evaluation of programs to help low-wage workers sustain employment and advance in the labor market. The project encourages sites to implement innovative programs, provides reliable information about implementation, impacts, and costs of the programs, and builds a firm knowledge base for practitioners. Sites use one or a mix of education, training, and work experience. Each of the ERA project sites is being evaluated using a random assignment design in which eligible clients are assigned, by chance, to a program group that is eligible for ERA services or to a control group that receives the services that were available before the ERA project was developed. MDRC will use surveys and administrative records to follow both groups for up to three years.

Hard-to Employ Demonstration and Evaluation Project

Evaluator	Manpower Development Research Corporation (MDRC)
Project Period	September 2001 – September 2010
Research Design	Random assignment of program and control groups (experimental impact)
Sites Studied	Site selection ongoing
Findings	Not yet available
Project Summary	This project assesses the effectiveness of programs designed to enhance employment outcomes for current and former TANF recipients and other low-income parents who have demonstrated difficulty earning and sustaining employment. In addition to measuring programmatic effects on adults' employment and earnings, the project evaluates family functioning, child well-being (from early childhood through adolescence), and two-generation programs that provide employment services to adults and direct services to children or youth. The project also examines the issues and challenges in implementing and operating different approaches that promote employment among the hard-to-employ, the services included in such programs, how programs meet the needs of participants with multiple employment or family challenges, the primary sources of funding for various program models, and the benefits and costs of programs studied.

Rural Welfare-to-Work Strategies Demonstration Project

Evaluator	Mathematica
Project Period	September 2000 – September 2005
Research Design	Random assignment of program and control groups (experimental impact)
Sites Studied	Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, Vermont, and Washington
Findings	Implementation findings available
Project Summary	This multi-year evaluation is designed to test approaches to helping TANF recipients and other low-income rural families find sustained employment. The study will help states and localities learn from the successes of other programs. The evaluation has three main parts: (1) an in-depth process study to identify implementation issues and challenges and provide program details on how programs operate and achieve observed results; (2) an impact study to rigorously assess the effects of the program on participants' employment and other outcomes by drawing on data from welfare-to-work program sponsors, administrative records data from human services programs, and baseline and survey data collected in follow-up interviews; and (3) a cost-benefit study to assess the cost effectiveness of program outcomes.

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Key Ongoing and New Welfare Research Projects

CHILD ISSUES

Evaluation of Child Care Subsidy Strategies

Evaluator	Abt Associates
Project Period	2002 – 2009
Research Design	Random assignment of program and control groups (experimental impact)
Sites Studied	Site selection in progress
Findings	Not yet available
Project Summary	The Child Care Bureau contracted this seven-year evaluation of alternative state or local program and policy strategies related to subsidized child care that have implications for family economic advancement and for family and child stability and well-being. The overall goal is to ascertain the net or differential impacts in selected sites resulting from different programs or policies related to subsidized child care. A wide range of child care policies may be tested; examples include changes in eligibility rules designed to promote stability of care; changes in levels of subsidies or families' co-payments; and tests of "tiered reimbursement" to child care providers depending upon the quality of care.

Head Start Impact Study

Evaluator	Westat, The Urban Institute, American Institutes for Research (AIR), Decision Information Resources (DIR)
Project Period	October 2000 – 2006
Research Design	Random assignment of program and control groups (experimental impact)
Sites Studied	Site selection ongoing (75 nationally representative grantee/delegate agencies)
Findings	Not yet available
Project Summary	The National Head Start Impact Study has two primary goals: (1) to determine on a national basis how Head Start effects the school readiness of children participating in the program as compared to nonenrolled children; and (2) to determine under which conditions Head Start works best and for which children. The study will examine various factors that could effect the results of the Head Start program, including characteristics of children attending Head Start, children's home environments, type of Head Start program available (home or center-based, part- vs. full-day, one versus two years exposure), quality indicators such as staff ratio and curriculum, and the availability and quality of other child care and preschool programs in the area.

School Readiness Projects

Evaluator	To be selected
Project Period	Not yet available
Research Design	Random assignment of program and control groups (experimental impact)
Sites Studied	Not yet available.
Findings	Not yet available
Project Summary	The federal Interagency Early Childhood Research Initiative will soon be publishing a request for proposals (RFP) for this project. This initiative has looked at integrative interventions for kids prior to school entry—not restricted to assessments of literacy curricula only. The U.S. Department of Education ran a competition last year, and may do so again, for studies looking at the effectiveness of single-dimension and/or "boxed" curricula.

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Key Ongoing and New Welfare Research Projects

FAMILY SUPPORT AND STABILITY ISSUES

Building Strong Families Evaluation

Evaluator	Mathematica
Project Period	2002 – 2011
Research Design	Random assignment of program and control groups (experimental impact)
Sites Studied	Site selection ongoing
Findings	Not yet available
Project Summary	The Building Strong Families (BSF) project is designed to learn whether well-designed interventions can help couples fulfill their aspirations for a healthy marriage and a strong family. The project will test interventions with low-income, unwed couples beginning around the time of their child's birth. The programs will be designed to help such couples strengthen their relationship, achieve a healthy marriage—if that is the path they choose, and thus enhance child and family well-being. They will be designed around two main components: (1) instruction and support to improve marriage and relationship skills and enhance couples' understanding of marriage; and (2) a variety of services that could help low-income couples sustain a healthy relationship. After an initial program evaluation, well-designed programs that make good implementation progress will be monitored for a pilot operations period, and six sites will ultimately be chosen for the evaluation.

Independent Living Evaluation

Evaluator	The Urban Institute; Chapin Hall; National Opinion Research Center
Project Period	2003 – 2006
Research Design	Random assignment of program and control groups (experimental impact)
Sites Studied	Site selection ongoing
Findings	Not yet available
Project Summary	This project involves an initial evaluability assessment and a five-year evaluation of selected programs funded through the John Chafee Foster Care Independence Program (CFCIP). The Foster Care Independence Act of 1999, which enacted the John H. Chafee Foster Care Independence Program offers assistance to help current and former foster care youths achieve self-sufficiency. The ultimate goal is to determine the effects of independent living programs funded under CFCIP in achieving key outcomes for participating youth, including increased educational attainment, higher employment rates and stability, greater interpersonal and relationship skills, reduced nonmarital pregnancies and births, and reduced delinquency and crime rates.

Sustaining the impressive set of research experiments currently underway and monitoring their findings is extraordinarily important, as the questions addressed are so relevant to the next generation of welfare programs.

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Research Forum on Children, Families, and the New Federalism

The Research Forum, an initiative of the National Center for Children in Poverty, hosted at the Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, encourages collaborative research and informed policy on welfare reform and vulnerable populations. The Research Forum's ultimate goal is to identify and promote strategies that protect and enhance the well-being of poor children and their families.

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the forum, January 2003, Vol. 6, No. 1

The newsletter appears four times a year, printed on recycled paper and accessible through the Web at: http://www.researchforum.org. The Research Forum has been funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Chase Manhattan Foundation, Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, George Gund Foundation, David and Lucile Packard Foundation, United Way of New York City, and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. For further information write Research Forum on Children, Families, and the New Federalism, NCCP, 154 Haven Avenue, New York, NY 10032. Tel: (212) 304-7150. Fax: (212) 544-4200. E-mail: info@researchforum.org.

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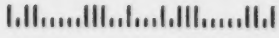

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the forum VOL. 6, NO. 2 MARCH 2003

RESEARCH FORUM ON CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND THE NEW FEDERALISM

Study Identifies Multiple Strategies and Critical Factors for Integrating Human Services

by Mark Ragan

Many families need multiple benefits and services, such as child care, job training, access to health care, and counseling, in order to succeed in the labor market. The desire to simplify and streamline client processes—often called "service integration"—is frequently cited as *the* solution to the often confusing, sometimes redundant, and generally uncoordinated mix of programs that exists at the local level to help these families.

But service integration is not a simple stand-alone project that involves something as seemingly straightforward as collocating staff from multiple programs. And it is about more than making a few procedural changes.

According to findings from a 12-state study begun in late 2001 by the Rockefeller Institute of Government and funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, service integration occurs where a complex combination of strategies is employed in an environment that facilitates their implementation. It is about institutional change to create a more coherent, holistic, human service system, and it is not easily accomplished.

For many years, human service program administrators have expressed a strong interest in developing service delivery systems that better meet the needs of vulnerable families. Welfare reform legislation in 1996 provided additional impetus to craft more coordinated service delivery systems to enable families to leave and stay off welfare. Under the current cash assistance welfare program known as TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families), parents are expected to seek employment; cash benefits are now time-limited; and self-sufficiency is the goal.

In the study, field research in local offices in the 12 states (see table on page 2) attempted to answer the following questions: Where *has* service integration occurred, and what does it look like in the real world? How much progress has been made developing coherent human service systems? If good examples of service integration can be found, what were the factors that contributed to the success of these efforts? Do the experiences of local practitioners provide lessons for others interested in comprehensive service reform?

Note from the Director–Barbara B. Blum

Integrating human services is an extraordinarily important and timely subject. Mark Ragan, a Senior Fellow at the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government—the public policy research arm of the State University of New York—has been directing research on management systems for human services and was formerly the Director of the Office of State Systems for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. In this issue of *the forum*, he points out that there are multiple strategies to integration and many critical factors affecting successful outcomes. As flexibility is advocated for states and localities and as resources for human services have been reduced, understanding the complexities of integration is crucial to sound policymaking.

Client Is Best Judge If Services Are Integrated

But what *is* service integration? There is no single answer. Based on observations at the sites visited for this study, service integration is a *combination* of strategies that simplify and facilitate access to benefits and services. Each site has implemented a distinctive mix of strategies, processes, and partnerships (see figure on page 5).

While integration of services is not uncommon within program groupings such as TANF, Food Stamps, and Medicaid, much less common is integration *across* program groupings, such as income support programs, health-related programs, and child welfare programs. The most comprehensive examples of service integration occur in locations where the division between income support and child welfare programs is addressed (see sample on page 2).

How does one determine whether services are integrated? The key, at least for this study, was to look at

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Service integration is happening where strong leaders and able managers, as well as motivated staff, share a clear vision and have the energy and patience to make the vision real.

Service Integration Study Sites

CALIFORNIA	05/02	Local offices in San Mateo County
COLORADO	04/02	Local offices in Mesa and El Paso Counties
GEORGIA	02/02	Local offices in Bibb County
KENTUCKY	09/02	State offices in Frankfort and local offices in Jefferson County
MINNESOTA	07/02	Local offices in Anoka and Dakota Counties
NEBRASKA	04/02	State offices in Lincoln; local offices in Lincoln, Gage, and Seward Counties
NEW JERSEY	01/02	State offices in Trenton; local offices in Atlantic and Ocean Counties
OHIO	06/02	Local offices in Montgomery County
OREGON	12/01	State offices in Salem; local offices in Coos and Jackson Counties
PENNSYLVANIA	02/02	Local offices in Allegheny County
VIRGINIA	03/02	Local offices in Fairfax County
WISCONSIN	07/02	Local offices in Racine and Kenosha Counties

More detailed information regarding many of the sites visited for the study can be found at: http://www.rockinst.org/quick_tour/federalism/service_integration.html.

Service Integration in San Mateo County, California

The Human Services Agency (HSA) of San Mateo County is a large organization that includes a wide range of human services programs in a single administrative unit. Income support programs, employment and training programs, youth and family services, housing programs, vocational rehabilitation services, and alcohol and drug services are the responsibility of a single director of human services. But the story doesn't end there. HSA has implemented management and staff processes designed to facilitate the delivery of services to county residents. Examples of these processes include:

- **Regionalization.** HSA offices are located throughout the county. Staff and managers in these offices have flexibility to implement policies in ways that meet local needs.
- **Matrix Management.** Managers have dual responsibility. They are responsible for office operations within a region and for policy in areas of individual specialization.
- **True One-Stop Access to Services.** Clients have access to a broad range of programs in a single location.
- **A Common Intake Process.** Staff trained in multiple programs use a comprehensive screening and assessment tool to determine client needs.
- **Family Self-Sufficiency Teams.** Multi-disciplinary teams that include county staff representing multiple programs as well as service providers meet weekly to review cases and recommend appropriate services and benefits.
- **Information Systems Support.** A common case management and client tracking system (SMART), which is linked to a data warehouse that provides information for management decisionmaking, is accessible to all staff.
- **Collaboration with Community Partners.** HSA works closely with 17 Family Resource Centers and seven Core Service Agencies that provide a range of services to county families, all of which are connected to HSA via the SMART system.

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human service systems from a client's perspective. How difficult is it to obtain multiple benefits and services? Do families with multiple needs interact with many offices and caseworkers? Is there coordination or communication between program offices?

Finding the best examples of service integration meant locating sites where a number of strategies had been implemented to eliminate navigational barriers and bridge gaps between programs and service providers. The best place to look was at the local level, where clients interact with service providers, and where much of the real work of service integration is occurring.

Reforming Services Takes Collaboration, Integration, Consolidation

Strategies designed to improve the delivery of services can be characterized broadly as *administrative* and *operational*. Administrative strategies are behind-the-scenes changes that enable improvements in client services, including changes in the structure of human service agencies, blending funding streams, and integrating client data in shared information systems. Our study found local sites using the following administrative strategies:

- ***Consolidating governance structure.*** In many of the sites, efforts to simplify the service delivery system began with or were supported by reorganizing government agencies at the state level, local level, or in some cases both. Many of the counties visited for this study consolidated multiple county-administered program offices into one large, human service office.
- ***Collaborative planning, management, and oversight at the local level.*** In many localities, a board or similar body composed of community leaders and local program managers meets regularly and is involved in planning, setting goals, and developing strategies to meet the needs of the local population.
- ***Collaborating to provide additional services.*** TANF and other funds are being used to support community-based service organizations. These organizations offer a range of services, such as family crisis intervention and youth mentoring programs that complement services provided by state and county governments.
- ***Integrating funding streams.*** The ability to combine TANF and other funds gives local managers the flexibility to simplify administration and to provide services that might otherwise be unavailable if each funding stream had to be segregated.
- ***Integrating a wider range of service providers in local systems.*** In many locations, private nonprofit and for-profit providers are being integrated into what have traditionally been governmental processes.
- ***Integrating information and information systems.*** Two common complaints about information sharing are privacy concerns and limitations of current information systems to share data across programs. One low-tech solution is to secure an information release from clients that allows programs to share information. Information systems present more complex challenges, but there are encouraging developments on this front as well.

Operational strategies, which more directly affect casework practices and client-related processes, include collocation of multiple programs in "one-stop" offices and integration of staff from multiple agencies into service teams. The 12 study sites exhibited several operational strategies:

- ***Consolidating the location of client services—collocation.*** The majority of sites visited have developed one-stop offices to improve service delivery. Collocation is, in many instances, a critical step in facilitating the strategies identified in this study. Indeed, many people associate the concept of service integration with collocation. Managers and staff suggest that collocation improves formal and informal communications, facilitates client-related processes by simplifying access to programs and services, and creates bonds between staff from different organizations.
- ***Integrating client intake and assessment processes.*** In many sites, collocation was one step in a larger effort to simplify and streamline client processes. For instance, staff can use a standardized assessment tool to determine the need for a wide range of programs and services.
- ***Integrating staff from multiple organizations and programs in teams.*** One of the advantages of collocation is the ease with which staff from multiple agencies can work together. In many locations, managers have taken the opportunity to move beyond collocation to create multidisciplinary teams.
- ***Coordinating case plans.*** In order to ensure that case plans for different programs do not conflict, many sites hold regular cross-program team "staffings." At these meetings, staff present individual cases, discuss strategies, and share information about clients to ensure that all programs involved in a case are working together.
- ***Consolidating staff functions.*** In many locations, staff responsibilities have changed to reflect a service-oriented approach by combining staff functions that were previously separate.
- ***Consolidating case management across programs.*** One of the most challenging operational strategies is consolidating case management functions across a broad range of programs, where a single caseworker is responsible for ongoing casework that spans traditional program groupings, such as income support *and* employment and training programs.

Leadership, Training, Relationships Are Critical Factors

It would be a mistake to assume that policy changes, devolution, and the flexibility of TANF funds in and of themselves ensure that local systems are improved. Managers at the study sites suggested several other factors that are critical to an integrated service system.

- ***Leadership.*** In the majority of the sites visited, managers traced efforts to improve service delivery to one or a small number of leaders who were able to enlist the support of the human services community.
- ***Experienced managers.*** Senior managers in most of the sites visited had many years of experience working with human service programs, usually within the same community. The experience of these managers both as program administrators and members of the local human service community facilitated efforts to develop connections between programs.
- ***Staff training and development.*** A common issue mentioned repeatedly is the need for continual staff training and development. Cross program training is conducted at regular intervals in almost all of the sites.
- ***Willingness to take chances, experiment, and change.*** Managers frequently spoke of their independence from higher-level bureaucracy. They value the flexibility inherent in the TANF program that has provided the means to implement innovative and untried strategies.
- ***Clearly defined shared mission.*** Although the specific language varies significantly from site to site, the constant is that each site has a clear mission statement developed by representatives of agency management, staff, and community partners.
- ***Community involvement.*** The community has to be actively involved in providing services beyond those available through government programs and to ensure buy-in for service delivery improvements.
- ***Strength-based, client-focused processes.*** Another common characteristic of service integration efforts is client and family strength-based assessment and case management processes. In addition to the focus on client strengths, expectations, and goals, a number of sites include the family when their case is discussed by cross-program teams.
- ***Stability.*** A common characteristic of many of the sites is the longevity of local leadership. Some of the sites have been working to integrate service delivery for a decade or longer. In many of these sites, the leaders who shared the original vision continue to be involved with the project.
- ***Measuring performance.*** Managers pay close attention to performance indicators required by state and federal agencies as well as locally developed performance and outcome measures.
- ***Personal relationships.*** Managers at the study sites emphasized the importance of relationships with their peers. Accomplishing the many tasks associated with comprehensive service reform demands frequent interactions between agency managers and staff.
- ***Teams, teams, and more teams.*** As should be apparent from the descriptions above, staff at the study sites participate in teams—particularly management teams, team staffings, teams focused on specific client populations, and teams that set agency goals and priorities.
- ***Resources.*** In many of the sites, resources beyond federal and state program funds were needed to initiate and support local efforts to improve services.

Success of Institutional Change Measured in Attitude Change

Based on information gathered at the study sites, it is clear that comprehensive systems designed to better meet the needs of clients and improve program outcomes have been developed in a number of locations.

The nature and extent of integration varies greatly, influenced in no small part by such factors as governance structures and the people who run local programs and staff local offices. Service integration is happening where strong leaders and able managers, as well as motivated staff, share a clear vision and have the energy and patience to make the vision real.

Direct evidence of the impacts of service integration is hard to come by. Anecdotes of how families were helped and positive performance measures within individual programs are commonly quoted to show that service integration makes a difference.

But perhaps the most obvious evidence is the attitude of staff and managers at the study sites. They were universally enthusiastic, proud, and anxious to talk about their experiences. They believe that service integration makes a significant difference and say that they would never go back to the old ways of doing business. Their enthusiasm and support is particularly noteworthy, given the increasing caseloads and decreasing resources during the past year.

Unfortunately, the most recent interviews for this study suggest that budget problems in the states are beginning to have a significant negative impact. Program rolls are swelling and funding is being cut, forcing some agencies to reduce staff or completely pull out of collocated sites.

More tough choices are ahead for local program managers, and deciding whether to continue efforts to integrate services will be one of them. There are those who believe that state budget crises present opportunities for

further reform, that the need for greater efficiency will spur efforts to better coordinate and integrate services.

Managers and staff at the study sites are convinced that this new way of doing business will endure. The lessons learned during the 1990s, when resources were more abundant and welfare rolls declined, may prove even more valuable in these challenging times.

Strategies and Critical Success Factors in Integrated Human Service Systems

INTEGRATED
CLIENT SERVICES

OPERATIONAL STRATEGIES

- Collocating Staff
- Integrating Intake and Assessment
- Consolidating Staff Functions
- Coordinating Case Plans
- Creating Cross–Program Teams
- Consolidating Case Management

ADMINISTRATIVE STRATEGIES

- Consolidating Governance Structures
- Integrating Funding Streams
- Collaborating in Planning, Management, and Oversight
- Collaborating to Provide Additional Services
- Integrating a Wider Range of Providers in Local Systems
- Integrating Information and Information Systems

CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

- Leadership
- Stability
- Clear Mission
- Experienced Managers
- Time
- Political Support
- Staff Training and Development
- Patience
- Regular Meetings
- Teams
- Resources
- Personal Relationships
- Client Strength-Based Practices
- Community Involvement
- Performance Measures

Integrated client services occur where critical success factors facilitate the implementation of multiple operational and administrative strategies

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Research Forum on Children, Families, and the New Federalism

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the forum, March 2003, Vol. 6, No. 2

The newsletter appears four times a year, printed on recycled paper and accessible through the Web at: http://www.researchforum.org. The Research Forum has been funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Chase Manhattan Foundation, Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, George Gund Foundation, David and Lucile Packard Foundation, United Way of New York City, and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. For further information write Research Forum on Children, Families, and the New Federalism, NCCP, 154 Haven Avenue, New York, NY 10032. Tel: (212) 304-7150. Fax: (212) 544-4200. E-mail: info@researchforum.org.

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the forum VOL. 6, NO. 3 JUNE 2003

RESEARCH FORUM ON CHILDREN, FAMILIES, AND THE NEW FEDERALISM

Measuring Success of TANF for Children—Congress Considers Two Options

The well-being of children has been a crucial issue in the reauthorization of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant—the current federal cash assistance welfare program. Proposals from the White House, Senate, and House of Representatives have all included language to this effect:

- The Bush Administration has proposed amending the overall purpose of TANF "to increase the flexibility of states in operating a program designed to improve the well-being of children."
- The June 2002 bill passed by the Senate Finance Committee specifies the need to "develop comprehensive indicators to monitor child well-being in each state."
- The February 2003 bill passed by the House of Representatives states that "the Census shall implement or enhance a longitudinal survey of program participation... to allow for the assessment of the outcomes of continued welfare reform on the economic and child well-being of low-income families with children... and... provide state representative samples."

Thus, there appears to be broad consensus now among the Senate, House, and Bush Administration that the overarching goal of a reauthorized TANF should be the improvement of child well-being and that resources should be allocated to measure the attainment of this goal.

Quality data that provide indicators of child well-being would permit researchers and policymakers to monitor the status of children within low-income households. The need for such data is critical.

Previous Data Collection System Problematic

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) authorized the Survey of Program Dynamics (SPD), a panel study that was adopted from the larger longitudinal Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP), in hopes that its data would be used as the key evaluative tool for measuring the effects of TANF. While the SPD does offer rich data, it has experienced attrition rates (the rate at which people drop out of the survey over time) of almost 50 percent, which has jeopardized the representativeness, reliability, and utility of the survey information. Moreover, SPD data files have been released slowly and are complicated to use, hindering wide-scale research efforts by researchers and policy analysts. As a result, the SPD has at best minimally informed the discussions around TANF reauthorization.

Some findings on child well-being from other major research studies have been made available as reauthorization is considered. Studies with relevant findings include the Three-City study, the Growing Up in Poverty project, the National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies, the Minnesota Family Investment Program, and Canada's Self-Sufficiency project. Census statistics on child poverty and information from the U.S. General Accounting Office on child-only cases have also been important, but not sufficiently informative. A new or improved survey could

Note from the Director–Barbara B. Blum

During the lengthy discussions of reauthorization for welfare programs, the subject of child well-being has emerged explicitly in the proposals of the Bush Administration, the House, and the Senate. This issue of *the forum* draws on a careful analysis by Michael Laracy, Senior Associate at the Annie E. Casey Foundation, of two possible strategies to actually measure child well-being—the federal SIPP longitudinal survey and a state-level cross-sectional survey.

Since children comprise such a large proportion of the population living in poverty, learning more about how our nation's children are faring is extraordinarily important. Mr. Laracy's work highlights the complexity of gathering sound and timely data. The pros and cons of each strategy are evident.

A beneficial investment of resources will advance our ability to identify problems and design ways to improve child well-being. One approach would be to finance both the state-level survey strategy and the enhancement of SIPP. Each could validate the other and highlight new areas for inquiry.

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provide state- and national-level indicators that would permit the measurement of how well the goal of improving child well-being is being met.

Two Survey Options to Consider

Two options exist to provide policymakers with the data required to assess progress on the new TANF goal of improving child well-being: (1) an improved and expanded SIPP; or (2) a new state-level cross-sectional child well-being survey. The most fundamental difference between an improved and expanded SIPP and a state-level survey is the sample frame and focus. The SIPP is a **longitudinal survey** that follows a given set of households across time, while the state-level survey would be a **cross-sectional survey** that measures a "snapshot" of a new set of households at a given point in time. Both options have strengths and weaknesses that should be weighed as reauthorization discussions proceed. Key issues to consider include:

- Ability of data to answer relevant questions about child well-being
- Representiveness for all states
- Timeliness of data
- Ease of use for policymakers and researchers
- Attrition and response rates
- Cost

Can data answer relevant questions about child well-being?

The SIPP includes the key content items requested by the House TANF bill: out-of-wedlock childbearing; marriage; welfare dependency and compliance with work requirements; the beginning and ending of spells of assistance; work, earnings, and employment stability; and the well-being of children. To better address questions around child well-being, an expanded SIPP would include new lines of questioning on child, adolescent, and family status. This would provide richer, more detailed data on a select number of topics. It would also over-sample low-income households, increase the sample size, and add a fourth year to the panel's duration.

The design of the state-level survey allows for a greater number of child well-being indicators to be assessed, although in less detail. The state-level survey would likely use standardized questions to produce comparative data within and across all 50 states. In addition, it could address state-specific data needs with customized questions and specific domains of interest. Proponents of this option argue that while quality research on child well-being is already available at the national level, state-level data are lacking, which poses a particular problem as decision-making authority is increasingly shifted to the states.

Is the survey sample representative of all states?

A survey's sample is crucially important because it relates to the representativeness of the survey results. If an enhanced SIPP is authorized by Congress, the most significant change will involve the addition of some 13,500 households to the existing study, bringing the total to around 45,000 households. This would allow representative samples in several additional—but not all—states, thereby improving the ability to measure indicators at the state level for a subset of states. An increased sample size would also expand the percentage of households with children, currently only about 40 percent, to allow more relevant information on child well-being to be produced. However, because only a subset of states (California, Texas, New York, Florida, New Jersey, Indiana, and Virginia) would have representative samples, SIPP is best designed to provide national-level rather than state-level indicators of child well-being.

The suggested state-level survey, on the other hand, could build on a current survey such as the National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) that is sponsored by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau of the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration. The survey's sample size is 102,000 (2,000 per state and the District of Columbia). Having data representative of all 50 states allows for information to be obtained on any given state TANF program. This may be particularly useful given the quick rate at which state TANF programs change, making it difficult to identify which state programs are of interest well in advance.

How timely is the release of data?

The SIPP uses in-person interviews to obtain information on factors such as poverty, income, employment, health insurance coverage, work experience, and demographic characteristics. Coding the results of in-person interviews may be time consuming, contributing to slower turnaround of data for researchers and analysts to use. SIPP data are typically made available one year after collection.

Using telephone surveys and techniques such as computer-assisted telephone technology, data from a proposed state-level survey can be made available four months after being collected. Advantages to this technique include more frequent rounds of data collection and increased speed at which data may be coded and made available for analysis. Quick availability of data on general outcomes and indicators may provide policymakers with access to early feedback on failures and successes of programs.

Can data be easily analyzed by researchers and policymakers?

While the data sets compiled from surveys such as SIPP are exceedingly rich and powerful, they are also very complex to manipulate and use. Consequently, the data tend to be used by highly trained researchers in the federal government, universities, and think tanks.

In contrast, the data from cross-sectional surveys can be analyzed using simpler statistical techniques, making them more accessible to a broader range of researchers and policymakers.

To what extent do attrition and response rates affect survey results?

Previously, the SPD, derived from the SIPP, has suffered high attrition rates that can threaten the validity of longitudinal panel studies. Response rates with this method, however, tend to be high.

Answering Causal Questions

The primary advantage of a longitudinal survey is that researchers may observe changes in specific households across time. Thus, information is obtained at the household level that may inform questions of causality. Because cross-sectional information is obtained on a population level, it is not suitable for informing causal questions. It should be noted that true program impacts, or causal conclusions about outcomes directly attributable to a program, can only be made with formal random assignment experiments.

Because cross-sectional studies measure information at a specific point in time—using a different sample each time the survey is administered—attrition is not a factor. Low response rates, however, may be problematic with this technique. In-person data collection methods used by the SIPP typically yield high response rates and can allow for more detailed information to be obtained.

Is the survey cost-effective?

There is general agreement among the House, Senate, and White House that $10 million be allocated annually to data collection efforts. Because of the time and effort required to track particular families over time, longitudi-

Comparison of SIPP and State-Level Survey

	SIPP	State-Level Survey
Purpose	To provide data on economic issues (including income, employment, and service participation)	To measure child well-being on the state level
Survey Design	Longitudinal (follows given set of families across time)	Cross-sectional (snapshot of new set of families at each iteration)
Data collection technique	In-person	Telephone
Proposed sample size	44,962 households	100,000 households
Proposed frequency	Every 3 years	Every 2 years
Data turnaround	Slow (1 year)	Fast (4 months)
Cost per household	High	Low
State representation	Low sample sizes in many states	Representative of 50 states
Households with children	Part of sample	Total sample
Response rates	High	Low
Attrition rates	High	Not applicable
Ease of data analysis	More difficult	Less difficult
Data breadth and depth	Richer, more detailed data on fewer topics	Less detailed data on more topics
Indicator level	National-level indicators	State-level indicators
Usefulness of data	More useful to researchers	More useful to policymakers

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nal studies such as the SIPP tend to be more costly than cross-sectional studies. Because of increased staff and travel expenses associated with in-person interviews, such methods have a greater cost per family assessed that also results in less frequent rounds of data collection. Obtaining very large sample sizes can also be prohibitively expensive.

The proposed state-level survey using telephone survey techniques to obtain data has a relatively low cost per household. This enables a greater sample size to be obtained and more frequent rounds of data collection to be conducted. However, efforts must be made to use alternative methods to reach families without telephones, critical when studying low-income families.

Congress Should Consider Multiple Factors

In deciding between the two survey options, members of Congress should consider:

- Which methodology is best to answer questions about the degree to which the goal of improving child well-being is met?
- Which type of data will best inform future policy?
- What will be the most cost-effective method of providing the needed information?

The way Congress decides these questions could have a lasting impact on the millions of children in our nation living in low-income families. ■

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the forum, June 2003, Vol. 6, No. 3

The newsletter appears four times a year, printed on recycled paper and accessible through the Web at: http://www.researchforum.org. The Research Forum has been funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Chase Manhattan Foundation, Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, George Gund Foundation, David and Lucile Packard Foundation, United Way of New York City, and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. For further information write Research Forum on Children, Families, and the New Federalism, NCCP, 215 West 125th Street, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10027-4426. Tel: (646) 284-9600. Fax: (646) 284-9623. E-mail: info@researchforum.org.

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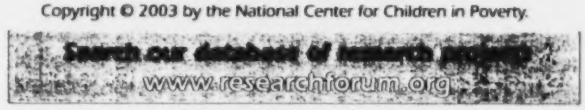

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the forum

a newsletter from the RESEARCH FORUM

Identifying and promoting strategies that prevent child poverty and that improve the lives of low-income children and their families

Children Fare Better in Low-Income Families with Work Supports

Recent five-year findings from the New Hope project corroborate other studies that show the positive effects of increased work supports on employment, income, and child well-being—even if the program is not directly targeted to children (see box on page 5).

Current language proposed in the 2003 reauthorization of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance program created by the 1996 welfare reform legislation would make the well-being of poor children its overarching purpose. The results of large-scale random assignment experiments like New Hope can help guide government officials to identify the policies that have the most positive effects on children but still support the goal of moving people off welfare and into the workforce.

Customized Supports Chosen by Families

New Hope was an innovative program designed to encourage work, reduce poverty, and demonstrate effective policies for working-poor adults and families in Wisconsin. Its underlying principles were that people who are willing to work full-time should be able to do so, and that they should not be poor when they do. The program, in existence from 1994 through 1998, consisted of four key components: (1) job assistance, including referral to a wage-paying community service job when necessary; (2) an earnings supplement for full-time workers that was designed to raise their income above the poverty level; (3) subsidized health insurance; and (4) subsidized child care. High-quality services were available in an atmosphere of respect and encouragement; project representatives offered participants assistance in conducting job searches, finding child care, and solving other employment-related problems.

An important feature of New Hope was that it let working parents choose among a suite of benefits to be used according to family needs and preferences. The program's "cafeteria" of supports included the four core supports and various "soft supports"—such as a New Hope project representative to help the enrollee obtain core benefits, workshops on practical topics, and informal get-togethers with other participants. Enrollees could assemble these supports into a customized package to meet their specific needs. The annual cost of the program was approximately $5,300 per family.

For Parents, More Work, Higher Income

New Hope increased employment over the five-year period, with the bulk of the increase occurring within the first two years. Program group members worked more total quarters and more consecutive quarters than did control group members.

Note from Research Forum Director–Barbara B. Blum

This issue of *the forum* focuses on the most recent findings from MDRC's New Hope experiment—its Child and Family Study—released in June 2003, that pertains to how children are faring in low-income working families. As reauthorization of TANF progresses, the importance of work supports (child care, income supplements, and health insurance) should be recognized as essential to improving the well-being of children, a stated goal of the proposed legislation. This research highlights both the benefits of work supports and the complex needs of individual families.

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The goals of increasing family income and helping children need not be inconsistent with the goal of moving parents to work.

New Hope also increased earnings-related income and total income over the five-year period. But the size of the effects diminished after Year Three, when the program supports ended.

Little Impact on Parenting

There is abundant nonexperimental evidence that the effects of income on children's psychological well-being occur in part by influencing parents' well-being and parenting practices. New Hope had some modest effects on parents' psychological well-being, including reduced depression at the five-year follow-up. However, the project had few impacts on parenting and parent-child relations, although New Hope parents had slightly fewer problems with discipline. Some improved parenting was experienced for boys and adolescents.

The limited effects of employment on mothers' mental health and parenting could be because work can produce both stress and psychological well-being. However, parenting involves more than direct interaction with children; parents affect their children by the arrangements they make for children's experiences in school, the community, and other settings. This aspect of parenting is often referred to as "family management."

For Children, Stable, Center-Based Child Care

Low-income parents face particular challenges in arranging care, largely because they are less able than middle- and upper-income parents to pay market rates for child care. Consequently, poor families tend to rely on relatives to care for children. Although they are less likely to use paid care, when low-income parents do pay for care, they spend five times more of their income than families who are not poor. In fact, child care often represents the second or third greatest expense for low-income working families.

Children in the New Hope program were significantly more likely to be placed in stable, organized child care facilities than those not in the program. New Hope substantially increased children's time in formal center-based care and in after-school programs—even after eligibility for child care subsidies ended. Program children spent less time in home-based care, which is often unregulated, and being cared for by minors. Adolescents were more likely to participate in structured after-school programs such as team sports and youth groups.

Because formal, center-based care is more costly, it is likely that the New Hope income supplement and child care subsidy expanded parents' options. And once parents were familiar with the benefits of center-based care (including reliability and cognitive and educational advantages), they were more likely to choose it even after their subsidies expired.

Better Academic, Social Outcomes

Even after the program ended, New Hope children had better academic and social outcomes than their control group peers. Scores on standardized reading achievement tests were higher and parent-reported performance reading was better. Boys had additional achievements, with higher teacher-reported academic skills and greater educational expectations and school engagement. Given the evidence that center-based care and after-school programs can positively impact children's intellectual and cognitive development, these experiences may have contributed to the better academic performance of New Hope children. There is also evidence that children in families who move out of poverty during the first few years of the child's life show gains in performance on tests of cognitive abilities. Therefore, the increased resources produced by New Hope might have occurred at a developmentally important time for the younger children in the sample.

The long lasting academic achievement outcomes may also have resulted from other advantages accrued during the three-year benefit period that led to an upward spiral. In other words, the better school performance (as rated by teachers) that children demonstrated at the two-year evaluation could have led to experiences of success, positive attitudes about school, and positive perceptions by teachers that were self-perpetuating.

Parents in New Hope families rated their children higher on positive social behavior than did parents in control group families, but there were no significant impacts on problem behavior.

Most of the research on low-income families suggests that young children's cognitive and social development is more positive in families with employed mothers.

Selected Research Projects with Findings on Impacts of Work Supports on Children

Note: For more information on these and other projects, visit the Research Forum project database: www.researchforum.org

Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) Evaluation

Latest publication	*Reforming Welfare and Rewarding Work: A Summary of the Final Report on the Minnesota Family Investment Program* (MDRC, September 2000)
Project impacts	• Increased parental employment • Improved children's school achievement • Reduced behavior problems • No effects on children's health

Canada's Self-Sufficiency Project (SSP) Evaluation

Latest publication	*Making Work Pay: Final Report on the Self-Sufficiency Project for Long-Term Welfare Recipients* (MDRC, July 2002)
Project impacts	• Increased parental employment • Improved children's school achievement • No effects on behavior problems • Increased parental ratings of children's health

But much if not all of this difference is a function of preexisting differences between employed and unemployed mothers in terms of demographic attributes, skills, personality, and childrearing practices rather than being a product of employment. Parents' job quality is associated with positive outcomes for their families, so the fact that New Hope increased stable long-term employment may have contributed to children's positive development.

More Positive Impact on Boys than Girls

Although different effects of the program were not initially expected for boys and girls, the impacts on boys' school achievement, educational goals, and social behavior were more pronounced and more consistently positive, perhaps due to the increased resources available to families. Ethnographic interviews indicated that parents were concerned about boys' vulnerability to gangs and antisocial behavior, and so parents used the additional resources provided by New Hope to purchase goods and opportunities for their sons. Program group boys were more likely to be enrolled in extended daycare and in structured out-of-school activities that provided supervision and learning experiences.

Despite the fact that program group girls' achievement test scores and parent-reported achievement were slightly better than those of their control group counterparts, teachers rated New Hope girls more negatively on both classroom and social behavior than they did control group girls. In turn, program group girls tended to lack engagement with school and school-related activities and had lower educational expectations. The reasons for these negative patterns remain unclear, but the findings are nevertheless of concern. If the negative impacts on school behavior and involvement continue, they could result in lower educational attainment for girls.

Mixed Outcomes for Adolescents

Adolescents in New Hope families expressed more feelings of efficacy, greater engagement in school, higher expectations to attend and complete college, and stronger beliefs about the importance of community in their future lives. There were no program impacts on peer relations or on risky behavior for either gender. These young people were in elementary school when their parents entered New Hope.

Increases in maternal employment may have some negative effects, however, for children who are adolescents when their parents enter a program. In recent experiments testing welfare-to-work policies, including New Hope, there were scattered negative effects on school performance and minor deviant behavior for adolescents, even when programs raised income and had positive effects on younger children. One reason for some of the negative effects could be that children who are "too old" for child care have less supervision and structure when their parents are employed. Involvement in structured activities in school and the community is

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The choices permitted by New Hope allowed parents to use the benefits in ways that fit their overall circumstances and preferences.

one means of providing supervision and opportunities for youth development. At both the two-year and five-year follow-ups, children from New Hope families participated more frequently in these activities and were less likely to be in unsupervised settings, which could counteract some of the negative effects of not having a parent available at home during some of the out-of-school hours (including summer).

A second reason may be that adolescents often are expected to care for younger siblings or to assume more household chores while their parents work—although there was no evidence at either the two-year or the five-year evaluation that this occurred. In fact, the 9- to 12-year-olds in New Hope families were significantly less likely to care for siblings than were their control group counterparts. The New Hope ethnographic study found that adolescents with a strong parent-child relationship adjusted better to parental employment.

Multiple Paths of Influence Affected Children

New Hope affected children in a variety of ways—higher incomes, stable center-based care, and improved psychosocial well-being of parents all had impacts on child outcomes. The New Hope Ethnographic Study suggests that there was no single, predominant pathway through which the program assisted families and indirectly supported children's development. Rather, New Hope seemed to benefit different families in different ways, reflecting the wide diversity among the families who constitute the "working poor."

Most commonly, New Hope was helpful when it offered benefits that fit into the family's already-functioning daily routine. For example, child care vouchers helped parents who wanted to provide better-quality care (as they defined this) or who wanted to disentangle themselves from social networks that were not providing care well. Some parents found New Hope case representatives valuable allies in finding jobs and services. But many parents working swing shifts, nights, or two jobs—or those who had good, stable home care—did not use child care benefits. Parents who had health benefits did not find that benefit useful (although some did, because it also helped them to pay for employer-sponsored insurance); some other parents wanted to use New Hope's insurance but could not regularly provide the co-payment.

Other families simply found New Hope a help with the cascading problems that most working poor families face. Income supplements, more stable jobs, a community service job, or some combination of New Hope and state benefits helped them and increased their family stability. The parents who had no employment barriers or only one were especially likely to find their own path to more regular, stable employment and better daily life for their families, which in turn benefited their children.

Perhaps more important, there was some evidence that program group parents were more aware of community resources and of the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC). Ethnographic data suggest that a significant number of families intentionally used the EITC as a savings plan for making major purchases, reducing debt, and stabilizing rent and other payments.

No one pathway accounted for effects across all families, but the choices permitted by New Hope allowed parents to use the benefits in ways that fit their overall circumstances and preferences. This model fits the goal of allowing parental choice that was part of the 1996 welfare reform legislation.

Expanding Work Supports Benefit Children

The findings support the wisdom of recent expansions in work supports for low-income families, including increases in the value of the EITC and expansions in eligibility for Medicaid and child care subsidies. New Hope benefits were added to a range of work supports that already existed in Wisconsin, and it was not clear in this context whether they would have any added effect. The results of this study show that they did. In addition, the program's lasting effects on children have special relevance to the redesign of the nation's income support system for low-income families.

TANF's block grant structure gives states a lot of flexibility in how cash assistance program funds are used to support poor families. The New Hope findings suggest one possible means of achieving TANF's new purpose and show that the goals of increasing family income and helping children need not be inconsistent with the goal of moving parents to work.

The New Hope Project—Child and Family Study Sample

To examine New Hope's effects, a team of researchers at MDRC and the University of Texas at Austin conducted a large-scale random assignment study. Applicants who met the eligibility criteria were randomly assigned either to a program group that could participate in New Hope or to a control group that could not. Therefore, any differences between the adults or children in the two groups can be attributed to the New Hope intervention.

The first set of findings, released in April 1999, examined impacts on participants during their first two years in the program. This newsletter presents recent findings from the interim report, released in June 2003. The report examined results five years after study entry (two years after the end of the New Hope program) for a subgroup of the total sample—designated the Child and Family Study (CFS) sample. This sample was selected in order to evaluate the program's effects on children and families as well as on employment and income. The CFS sample includes all 745 adult sample members who had one or more children between the ages of 1 year, 0 months, and 10 years, 11 months, at the time of random assignment (55 percent of the total sample). If a family had more than one child in that age range, two children were identified as "focal children."

The evaluation includes a total of 1,140 focal children; a limited amount of information was collected about other children in the family. A final report will be released in the future examining New Hope's effects after eight years.

Summary of New Hope Project Impacts

Outcome	**Program Group Versus Control Group**
Parents' employment and income	Modestly higher income Less poverty More stable employment Higher wages
Parents' well-being	No difference in material or financial well-being Slightly better physical health Fewer depressive symptoms Better awareness of public and community resources Better able to sustain daily routine
Parenting	Few overall effects Fewer problems with control in discipline situations *Boys:* More positive parent relations *Adolescents:* More effective child management
Child care	More center-based care More after-school programs Less home-based care Less unsupervised care Fewer changes in arrangements
Children's out-of-school activities	More participation in religious activities and organizations *Adolescents:* More participation in structured activities (e.g., community sports)
Children's academic achievement	Better scores on standardized reading achievement test Better reading performance (as reported by parents) *Boys:* Better academic skills (as reported by teachers)
Children's motivation and well-being	No overall impacts *Boys:* Higher educational expectations Greater school engagement *Adolescents:* Higher educational expectations Greater school engagement Increased feelings of efficacy to reach goals Greater future community involvement
Children's social behavior	More positive social behavior (as reported by parents) No difference in risky, delinquent behavior *Boys:* More positive social behavior (as reported by teachers) More appropriate classroom behavior (as reported by teachers) Less hostility in provocation situations *Girls:* Less positive social behavior (as reported by teachers) More problem behavior (as reported by teachers)
Children's health	No impacts

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Research Forum on Children, Families, and the New Federalism

The Research Forum, an initiative of the National Center for Children in Poverty, Columbia University, encourages collaborative research and informed policy on welfare reform and vulnerable populations. The Research Forum's ultimate goal is to identify and promote strategies that protect and enhance the well-being of low-income children and their families.

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the forum, October 2003, Vol. 6, No. 4

The newsletter appears four times a year, printed on recycled paper and accessible through the Web at www.researchforum.org. The Research Forum has been funded by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Chase Manhattan Foundation, Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, George Gund Foundation, David and Lucile Packard Foundation, United Way of New York City, and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. For further information write Research Forum on Children, Families, and the New Federalism, NCCP, 215 West 125th Street, 3rd floor, New York, NY 10027-4426. Tel: (646) 284-9600. Fax: (646) 284-9623. E-mail: info@researchforum.org.

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EFF-089 (1/2003)

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